

Barnacle Bill Square

Calvin Campbell

Barnacle Bill the Sailor is one of my favorite square dances. I have used it about once a year for the last 60 years and I danced it many years before that. My favorite way is to do the dance to a live band. However, I seldom can find a live band that knows the tune any more.

Barnacle Bill the Sailor is an old drinking song. It is definitely not a children's song. If you want to hear the lyrics sung by Sourdough Slim, [click here](#). It's a good performance and the lyrics are relatively clean. You can find other lyrics that are not. There is a [musical score](#) at this website. The lyrics for a relatively clean version can be found on Vic Cedar's website. [Click here](#). This site also lists the other square dance singing call records that were made. You might be able to find someone with a copy. Here the LSF recording ([Click here](#))

The square dance version has been around since probably the 1940's. It a gimmick dance that is done in two time signatures (3/4 and 2/4). There are two that can still be purchased, is from the Lloyd Shaw Foundation website. [Click here](#) and [here](#). The LSF website also has a vocal version done by Dick Pasvolsky.

I called the dance at the Community Dance Leader's Seminar in 2015. [Click here](#) for the video. This is obviously my version of the dance and I vary it many ways as the spirit moves me. I have found that any square dance group from beginners to experienced modern western square dancers enjoy the dance when it is done in the right setting. MWSDers needs to do it on a party/game night or at an afterparty.